

Reading Through the New Testament

Pastoral Epistles (2 Timothy)

*Outline:

“Suffer hardship with me as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.” (2:3)

I. The Call of a Soldier of Christ (ch. 1)

- Courage and Faithfulness

II. The Character of a Soldier of Christ (ch. 2)

- He is strong
- He is single-minded
- He is strict
- He is secure
- He is sound of faith
- He is sanctified
- He is a servant

III. The Caution for a Soldier of Christ (ch.3)

- The peril of apostasy

IV. The Charge for a Soldier of Christ (ch.4:1-5)

- Preach the Word
- Endure Hardship
- Do the Work of an Evangelist

V. The Comfort of a Soldier of Christ (ch.4:6-22)

- A Good Finish
- A Good Future
- Good Friends

**adapted from Ryrie Study Bible, p.1860*

Background to the Letter

- This is Paul’s final letter, written shortly before his death, around 67 AD
- At the end of Acts, Paul was in prison in Rome. He was likely released, and resumed his missionary work for a short period of time until the persecution of Christians intensified during Nero’s reign. Paul was arrested once again and held prisoner in Rome, where he would face martyrdom.
- Paul was alone, abandoned by many. Others were engaged in ministry elsewhere (4:10-12). He encouraged Timothy to come soon.
- The letter is Paul’s “farewell discourse,” similar to the words of Moses in Deuteronomy 31, Joshua (23-24), David (1 Chron. 28-29), and Jesus (John 14-16).
- Though Paul realizes his life is drawing to a close, his outlook remained optimistic, looking towards the reward in heaven (4:8).
- One of the themes of the letter is fighting the good fight as a soldier of Christ Jesus. He warns of a time, in the last days, when many will fall away, but encourages Timothy and those who would follow to persevere.

A Good Soldier of the Lord: (2 Timothy 2:1-4)

1. It is important to never lose sight of the reality that we caught up in a spiritual conflict. The forces of darkness rage against the kingdom of light, and much is at stake. Thus, Paul encourages the young pastor, in verse 1, to “be s_____.” Where do we find the power we need to persevere and to overcome adversity? What keeps us going, when we are tempted to give up? (see also 1:7)

2. Paul had endured all kinds of afflictions throughout his ministry (i.e. 2 Cor. 11:23-29). But now, towards the end of his life, the Roman Empire was becoming increasingly hostile to followers of Christ. What does he urge Timothy, and all believers, to do in verse 3? How does Paul’s example inspire us?

3. In the spiritual battles we face, who is ultimately the enemy of God's people? Who is our commanding officer? How has the Lord equipped us to stand strong in the midst of the battle? Are we alone in this conflict, or do we have fellow soldiers who stand beside us?

4. If a soldier is to be effective in battle, where does his focus need to be? What if he allows himself to be distracted by "civilian pursuits?" Where does our focus need to be if we are to be good soldiers of Christ? What kinds of things can become distractions for our service?

Difficult Times Are Coming: 2 Timothy 3:1-17

5. Is it going to get easier, as time goes by, to be a servant of Christ in this world? Some believe that it is up to us to establish God's kingdom on earth, and little by little we will claim victories until the whole world is brought into a relationship with God. Is this the picture that we are given in this passage?

6. To be overly optimistic about our ability to "bring in the kingdom" would be naïve, but it would also be just as much of a mistake to suppose that we are helplessly fighting a losing battle. Will evil triumph in the end? Can God's people make a difference for Christ in our world and community? Is God breaking down strongholds all around us, and winning victories through His Church today?

7. Is persecution something strange and out of the ordinary for Christians, according to verse 12, that only a few Christians will have to endure? What should our response be, when the world laughs or ridicules or makes life difficult?

8. How does the Lord equip His people for the good works He has planned for us?

The Reward: 2 Timothy 4:1-8

9. What charge does the apostle Paul leave with Timothy and the Church today? What does the phrase "in season and out of season" signify? Where does the pastor get his message: his own personal opinions or from some greater authority?

10. What types of preaching should we expect from the pulpit, based on verses 2-5?

11. Paul was nearing the end of his life, on this earth. What kind of legacy did he leave? What kind of example does he set for pastors and all believers to follow?